DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 759 CS 010 736

AUTHOR Simmons, Joan
TITLE Learning Controversy: A Situational Perspective.
PUB DATE 21 Sep 91
NOTE 30p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Techniques; *Cooperative Learning; *Instructional Effectiveness; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Language Arts; Literature Reviews; Middle Schools; Models; *Reading Instruction; *Special Education; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Direct Instruction; Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Model

ABSTRACT

There are two divergent points of view concerning the placement and instruction of special students in regular middle school language arts and reading classrooms: cooperative learning, and direct instruction. Three areas of research have emerged from the social model of teaching strategies having to do with helping students study and learn together using the cooperative learning process. Meta-analysis of relevant studies indicates that cooperative learning activities results in both greater retention and higher achievement for students than other situations. Most of the criticism involves the structure of the cooperative activity rather than the value of cooperative learning. Direct instruction includes a great deal of academic engaged time in a teacher-directed classroom where sequential and structured materials are used. Numerous studies have indicated the effectiveness and enumerated the advantages of direct instruction for special education students, while other studies point out problems of direct instruction. The Situational Leadership Model commonly used in public policy decisions can aid in choosing an instructional model; it can be used to assess the teacher's own characteristics, the students' characteristics, and the type of classroom characteristics that are most useful in individual classroom situations. Learning models must fit the situation: middle school reading teachers will need to decide how much modification will be necessary to alter the instructional setting and to adapt materials. (A figure describing the Situational Leadership model is included; 26 references are attached.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED337759

LEARNING CONTROVERSY:

A SITUATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

for
Publication in E.R.I.C.

by
Joan Simmons
September 21, 1991

CS010736

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joan Simmons

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE ISSUE

Schools are a reflection of the community at large. There is a movement toward creating a sense of community and a common culture among all students. Current literature is concerned with the restructuring or reform of the schools. At issue is how to best serve the low achieving, at-risk, or special needs student. One of the goals of special education is for each student who is able to benefit from such instruction to be placed in an integrated classroom with regular education students sharing a common curriculum. The problem is how this can best be achieved. There are two divergent points of view concerning the placement and instruction of special students. One argument emphasizes cooperative and collaborative learning experiences where students share ideas and work together to learn. The other argument is in favor of direct instruction where the focus is upon teacher directed academic goals within a highly structured classroom.

This paper will explore the rationale for each approach as well as the advantages and disadvantages of both types of learning strategies. The paper will identify the differences between the two approaches to try to determine which approach is best for both academic and social goals for the special and remedial student. The focus will be upon the upper elementary and middle school student in the language arts classroom.

RATIONALE FOR THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Sam Crowell (1989) suggests when educators are deciding what our students need to know in the future, both the content and the

process must be considered. Content includes the importance of the information to be taught, questions that are inherent in the information, and the manner in which one discipline is related to another. Process includes looking at the ways in which the content is organized in order to extend its relationships. Teachers must look at the ways we learn in order to understand ourselves and our world. This way of thinking is suggested in the assumptions underlying cooperative learning.

According to Crowell, students learn cooperatively and collectively in small groups. Each student becomes responsible for his or her own learning as well as for the learning of each member of the group. The success of the group depends upon how the group functioned as well as the individual's performance. Since the emphasis is on student interaction, part of the learning experience is being a working member of a group. Content includes not only the information or material that is presented, but the cooperative experience itself. Crowell (1989) states that the interrelationships among sociology, interaction theory, psychology, and curriculum content are important to learning and when these interconnections are accentuated, they become most useful for learning.

THREE MODELS OF COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES

Joyce, Showers, and Rolheiser-Bennet(1987) have identified three areas of research that have emerged from the social model of teaching strategies having to do with helping students study and learn together using the cooperative learning process. David and Roger Johnson have studied the effects of cooperative tasks and reward structures on academic achievement, values, attitudes, and

behavior within groups. Robert Slavin has studied the manipulation of the complexity of social tasks. Yarl and Shlomo Sharan have studied a social model whereby students are organized into democratic problem solving groups to use scientific tools to explore academic and social problems. (Joyce, Showers, &Rolheiser-Bennett,1987) All three studies will be explored in this paper.

The Johnsons(1987) include five elements that need to be stressed for small group learning to be cooperative. First, positive interdependence is the perception that a student can not succeed unless the others in the group succeed as well. This can be accomplished by making sure the student knows that the goal of the group is to ensure that all group members learn. All group members receive a reward based upon the group's overall achievement. Resources can be distributed so that coordination among members is necessary to achieve the goal. Group members can be given specifically complementary roles in the group. One group member might have to complete his/her task in order for the next group member to start a task. The second element is individual accountability. The performance of each individual is evaluated so that the group knows who needs more help completing the assignment. Each member must feel that he or she must fulfill his or her responsibility for the group to be successful. The third element includes much verbal interaction where the students must explain, argue, and tie the new material to previous learning. The fourth element is social and collaborative skills. Students need to be taught leadership, decision making, communication, trust building, and conflict resolution skills. Lastly, group processing time must be

allowed for the group to discuss how well they are achieving the goals and maintaining effective relationships among group members. Feedback should be specific so the group can learn how it could function even more effectively. (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

Robert E. Slavin(1989) contends that there are two elements necessary for successful implementation of cooperative learning. The team must have a group goal that is important to them. This could be earning certificates, more recess time, or bonus points. He is opposed to having the grade largely determined by the group's performance. Second, the group's success must depend upon individual learning of all group members. The rewards might be based upon the average of their individual quiz scores. Group goals motivate the students to help each other learn by engaging in elaborate explanations as well as providing help to others or asking for help without embarrassment. (Slavin, 1988). His definition includes students working in small learning teams to master material initially presented by the teacher (Slavin & Madden, 1989). Groups generally have four members--one high achiever, two average achievers, and one low achiever(Slavin, 1987). One type of activity that he developed at Johns Hopkins University is the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD). The teacher presents a lesson to the class. The four student teams work to master the lesson where they are encouraged to explain ideas and skills to one another. At the end of the team study period, students take individual quizzes. Team scores are formed using a system that assigns points based on how much the individual student has improved over past records (Slavin, 1987).

The Sharan's(1987) view of cooperative learning emphasizes students helping each other learn, planning what and how to study, and sharing ideas and resources. The teacher allows varying degrees of choice about the substance and goals of the learning activity rather than dictating specific instructions so the group members become active participants in the process of acquiring knowledge. The students learn from practice over time because cooperative learning requires that helping, sharing, and cooperation become classroom norms. The teacher must model the social and communication skills expected from the students. The teacher gradually introduces cooperative games, tasks, and activities to help students acquire communication and helping skills. Interactions can not always be controlled so the teacher must be comfortable with varying degrees of uncertainty about what each member will contribute. There will also be much diversity in interests, talents, and pacing of work. The teacher will have to make decisions about how to balance cooperative behavior and academic and social goals. (Sharan & Sharan, 1987).

ADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Larry Cuban (1989) believes that mixed ability groups have been found to positively affect student motivation and learning. Further, the benefits of cooperative learning suggest a technology of instruction that fits a heterogeneous classroom. Educational reform must be designed to have intrinsic rewards that are interesting by themselves to meet student needs. All students want friends so cooperative learning provides a social as well as educational opportunity to allow reluctant learners to benefit from educational

activities (Nelson, 1989). Cooperative learning creates an atmosphere where friendships begin and grow because students learn to hear each others' opinions. Biklen (1989) state that when a teacher consciously plans activities where students can interact, friendships begin. Differences in individual ability can be accounted for by consciously varying the tasks so all students can participate. Group activities provide for students becoming allies which is especially important for students with special needs because they are more likely to be stereotyped, discriminated against, or stigmatized because of a disability. Biklen (1989) says that because of the interactions with other students in cooperative heterogeneous activities where each student is a valued member of the group and has a chance to help others, make choices, and model behaviors, students with disabilities achieve independence with a minimum of supervision.

The Johnsons (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of all of the relevant studies and found that cooperative learning activities resulted in both greater retention and higher achievement for students than other situations. Students also tended to use higher level thought processes and strategies. They found that cooperative activities resulted in motivation to achieve, persistence in completing tasks, positive attitudes toward the subject and the teacher, enhanced self-esteem, and greater psychological health. In order for students to be prepared for the world of work, they need to be able to interact with employers, clients, colleagues, and people who work for them. A great deal of experience with cooperative activities has been found to enhance interpersonal and group skills. Preparing

students for the future requires that teachers provide activities that allow students to use both knowledge and resources in order to interact effectively with the family, the job, the community, and society.

Slavin studied more than thirty experiments of cooperative groups and found that students gained more than in traditionally taught students. This was found to be true in rural, urban and suburban areas. Students tended to like the team learning classes better so behavior, self-esteem, and attendance improved. Mainstreamed special education students became better accepted by classmates in team learning situations. (Nelson, 1989, Slavin, 1989)

Joyce (1987) found that research about cooperative learning was appropriate for all curriculum areas and was extremely positive. He found that solid effects should occur in schools where teachers are trained in the strategy. The cooperative models allowed students to empathize with others while building positive feelings toward others which reduced both anti-social behavior and intergroup tensions. Cuban (1989) also found that mixed ability and multi-age groups positively affect motivation, learning, and test score gains. Koerner(1989) speaking about the Task Force on Education of Young Adolesence reported that cooperative learning is one of the best alternative ways to teach middle school students. They also advocate peer tutoring where high achieving students help less able students. "An essential component to any effort to eliminate tracking depends on staff development activities where teachers learn how to use alternative strategies," Koerner, (1989).

CRITICISM OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Most of the criticism has to do with the structure of the cooperative activity rather than with the value of cooperative learning. Slavin maintains that the studies previously discussed can be used at many grade levels, for many objectives, and in many subjects, but they are curriculum free because they rarely replace traditional texts or teaching approaches. For this reason, they rarely bring about fundamental change in classroom practice. He advocates the newest of the Student Team Learning methods out of Johns Hopkins called Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension (CIRC) for reading and writing in the upper elementary grades. Students work in teams to master reading and writing skills, but they do not take the test until all group members feel they are ready. The CIRC classes gained 30-70 percent of a grade equivalent more than the control classes (Slavin, 1987).

Slavin criticizes the Johnsons' Learning Together methods that he says students complete a single worksheet and are rewarded or graded on the basis of the worksheet. He says that without individual accountability, one or two members may do all the work and low achieving members may be ignored if they try to contribute or ask for help (Feldman, 1986, Slavin, 1988). The Johnsons replied that they do not recommend that procedure except under very special circumstances (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

The "free rider" problem may be eliminated by using Jigsaw (Aronson et al., 1978) where each student is assigned a special topic upon which he or she is to become an expert. Students meet to discuss the topic in "expert groups" before meeting in the original

groups to teach what theyhave learned. Research about the achievement effects of this procedure has been disappointing. However, there have been positive effects on student self-esteem and other social variables by using this procedure. The other danger with this procedure is that while the individual student may become an expert on his topic, he or she may not learn about his group's topics. A few changes make this sort of cooperative learning activity worthwhile. In Jigsaw II, the group members receive a reward on the basis of a final quiz on all topics so each student must learn about the other topics (Slavin in Feldman, 1986).

General criticisms of cooperative learning have occurred in the literature. One is that schools should teach competition because that is the way in which the world is structured. The Johnsons argue that we live in an interdependent world where almost all human activity is cooperative so cooperation must be taught. Another argument is that high achieving students are penalized by working in heterogeneous cooperative learning groups. The Johnsons respond that research illustrates that high achievers often do better and have never done worse than students in individualistic or competitive classrooms. Another criticism is that a single group grade shared by the group members is not fair. The Johnsons argue that for cooperative groups to be successful, the group members must perceive that the distribution of grades is fair or they will be unmotivated to actively participate. As students gain experience with the process, they will perceive that a single grade is fair. (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986).

RATIONALE FOR THE DIRECT INSTRUCTION MODEL

The environment is a critical factor in learning according to the behavioral approach. Much emphasis is placed upon the teacher's role in arranging the classroom for optimal learning. A major factor with student learning difficulties is teaching failure. Therefore, the responsibility for a student's learning is shared between the teacher and the student (Mercer, 1987).

Direct instruction is a highly organized approach to correct this problem. According to Rosenshine (in Mercer, 1987) direct instruction includes a great deal of academic engaged time in a teacher-directed classroom where sequential and structured materials are used. The following conditions must be observed. Goals must be made clear to the student. Time allocated for instruction must be continuous and of sufficient duration. There is extensive subject content coverage while student performance is monitored on a regular basis. Questions are at a low cognitive level to produce a majority of correct responses. Feedback to the student is immediate and is academically oriented. The teacher controls the instructional goals, chooses the material appropriate for the student's ability level, and paces the instructional time. Interaction is structured, but not authoritarian. (Rosenshine, 1978). According to Mercer (1987) the structured organization and assessment of academic skills emphasize a terminal academic behavior such as reading comprehension or a subskill necessary to learn the terminal behavior task analysis is used to determine the sequence of skills to be taught by dividing the lesson into parts in order to identify the skills needed. Skills build

upon one another resulting in cumulative learning. A.R.Frank describes four steps in task analysis.

> (1) clearly state the terminal behavior, (2) identify the subskills of the terminal behavior and sequence them from simple to complex, (3) informally assess to see which subskills the student already can perform, and (4) start teaching in sequential order, beginning with the easiest subskill that the student has not learned (Frank in Mercer, 1987).

The instructional goals, the conditions for instruction, and the criteria for learning are a result of observable and measurable instructional objectives. Informal criterion assessment which is linked to specific objectives such as using an informal reading inventory can be used for placing the student in the proper materials. Daily monitoring of student progress in order to provide immediate feedback to both the teacher and the student helps improve instruction and motivation for meeting the objectives (Reith et al., 1981).

N.G.Haring proposes a learning hierarchy for the student to progress from "(a) skill acquisition to (b) proficiency to (c) generalization of instructional format to (d) adaptation of the skill to solve new problems" (Haring in Reith, Polsgrove & Semmel, 1981). McLeskey, Reith, and Polsgrove (in Reith, Polsgrove, & Semmel, 1981) found that most teachers provide instruction at the acquisition level so a necessary goal for the teacher is to develop procedures to teach students to generalize their skills and to use problem solving skills.

According to Reith, Polsgrove, and Semmel (1981) immediate feedback about successful performance is necessary for the student

to correct errors. Teacher reinforcement helps establish and maintain both academic and social goals. For this reason, the teacher needs to be well acquainted with the appropriate use of reinforcement techniques and corrective feedback. Positive reinforcers such as praise, social recognition, special activities, and free choice of activities can be used to give appropriate feedback to the student. The amount of transition time between tasks should be minimized so the student spends optimal time-on-task. Directions should be clear in order to avoid repetition. Work should begin immediately. Groups receiving instruction should be placed away from other students in order to avoid distracting the rest of the class. The teacher needs to arrange materials before beginning group instruction and the student's should have easy access to materials they will need. (Reith, Polsgrove, & Semmel, 1981).

Rena Lewis has summarized her views about using direct instruction to teach reading to students with learning disabilities or reading difficulties.

(1) Teach--Zigmond and her colleagues observed 105 students each for a total of 30 hours and found that students only read for a total of 27 minutes out of a 287 minute instructional day. (2) Train skills directly--the learning task should assist acquisition of skills necessary for the instructional goal.

(3) Focus learners on task--students who have problems with attention can be trained to listen to group instruction. (4) Provide learners with strategies to perform the task--strategies should be taught in isolation, practiced with controlled materials, and then applied to subject area content (Deshler et al., 1981). (5) Teach for

automaticity and generalization--ample supervised practice activities in many different situations should be provided so the student can strive for accuracy. (6) Consider the interactions between the teacher's behavior and the student's strategy use--teaching behaviors are not isolated, but interact with the prior background students have about strategy use. (Lewis, 1983).

DIRECT INSTRUCTION IN READING COMPREHENSION IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

According to Gersten and Carnine (1986), the researchers at the University of Oregon have spent fifteen years developing and evaluating direct instruction in reading comprehension. They felt that precise principles of instructional design could be developed for a complex skill such as reading comprehension which could be empirically investigated. In the early studies called Follow Through, they focused on the best wording to use to demonstrate a comprehension skill, the most effective ways to correct errors, and the number and range of examples necessary to master a new comcept. Current research focuses on how to apply direct instruction to teach middle and secondary school students.

After much research, it was found that the majority of teachers merely give the students the correct answers without teaching the strategies to enable the students to find the answer. Sixteen experimental studies were conducted using explicit step-by-step training of comprehension strategies to show students how a thinking process can lead to correct solutions. The steps are as follows:(1) Instruction on explicit step-by-step strategy. (If this is not possible or necessary, model the effective behavior.)

(2) Student masters each step. (3) Strategy corrections for errors the student makes. (4) Teacher gradually fades directed activities so the student practices more independent work. (5) Systematic practice time is available for the student using a wide range of examples. (6) Cumulative review. (7) Teach strategies that help students anticipate errors. The sixteen studies covered a range of comprehension activities including general comprehension, inference, specific skills, text structure, and comprehension in content areas. The results demonstrated that low achieving students benefit from modeling the teacher's demonstration and they later modify the strategies to suit their individual style. Students who were able to easily move through the sequence of the activities do not need prompts for very long while easily distracted students need to be monitored and provided with help until they are ready to work independently (Gersten and Carnine, 1986).

ADVANTAGES OF THE DIRECT INSTRUCTION MODEL

Reith et al. (1981) found that student engaged time is much higher during teacher led activities as opposed to seatwork activities. Also, students with reading difficulties made the greatest gains when instruction was accompanied by active support, positive corrective feedback, and a greater percentage of oral reading time. Cuban (1989) found that the research on teacher effectiveness demonstrated that test scores of at-risk students improved in certain elementary grades when direct instruction was used.

Treiber and Lakey (in Mercer, 1987) found that since students with a learning disability have academic performance deficits, direct

instruction improves specific academic skills without dealing with process deficits. They state,

> The direct treatment of these inferred deficits is neither possible nor necessary for academic improvements to occur. This assertion is not a statement of faith, but rather a conclusion based on empirical evidence.

They conclude that direct instruction is successful for students with learning disabilities in the areas of reading comprehension, letter identification, sight words, vocabulary, and oral reading.

According to Tarver (1986), there is strong support for direct instruction. She says, "Current knowledge suggests that DI theory, principles, and programs provide a strong base on which to build effective instructional programs for learning disabled students at the secondary level."

Stevens and Rosenshine (in Mercer,1987) states that the teacher effectiveness literature finds that the most effective teachers are strong leaders who direct the instructional process. These teachers maintain a strong academic focus while modeling and demonstrating sequential instruction, control practice with prompts and feedback, and provide for independent practice.

Ysseldyke and Mirkin (1981) and Ysseldyke and Shinn (1981) reviewed the published literature on the direct instruction model and concluded for the most part the direct instruction approach is successful (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982).

Pearson (in Gersten & Carnine, 1986) synthesized the research on direct instruction used to teach reading comprehension and concluded that "younger and poorer readers benefit from conscious explicit attempts to alter comprehension strategies". A meta-analysis

of the University of Oregon studies revealed a mean magnitude of effect of .97 standard deviation units which is well above levels for educational significance. Significance effects were also demonstrated for retention of skills (Gersten and Carnine, 1986).

CRITICISM OF THE DIRECT INSTRUCTION MODEL

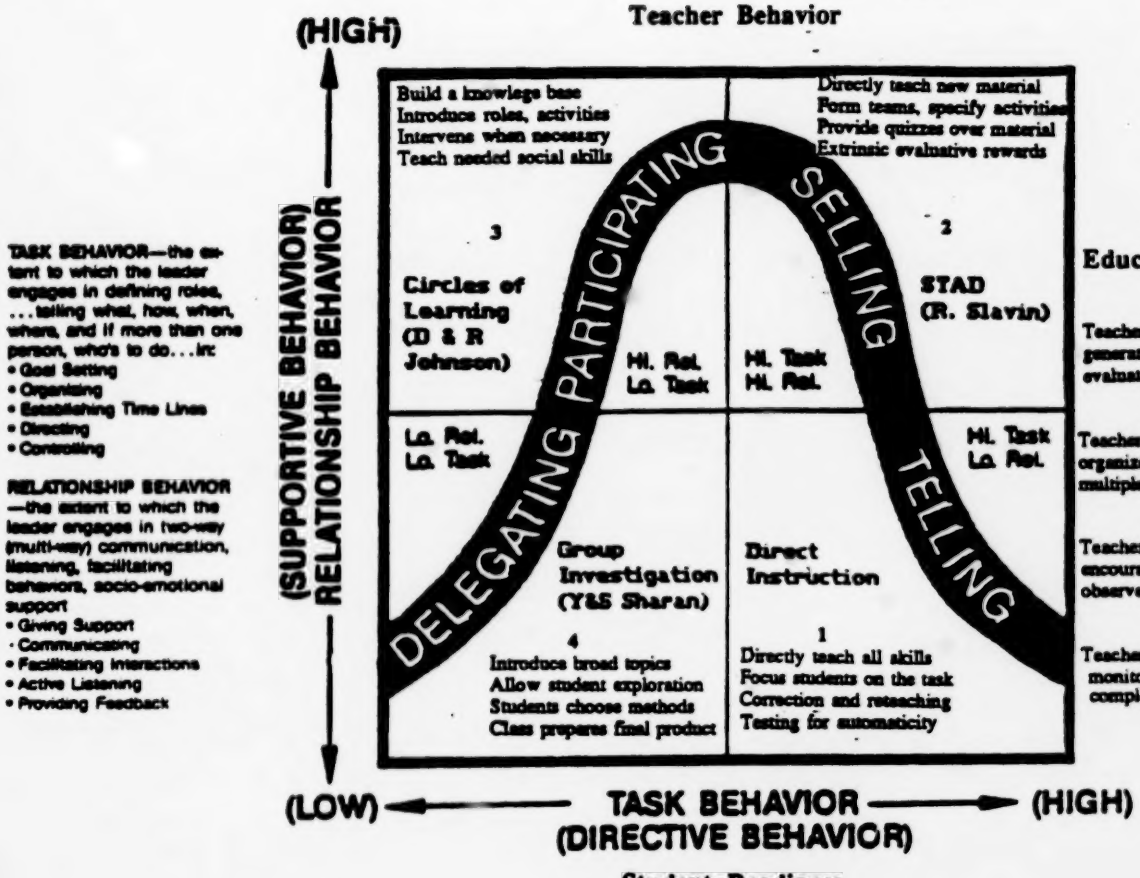
The effective schools movement was the catalyst for the attention that direct instruction received. Lambert (1989) summarizes some of the criticisms of direct instruction. According to Peterson (in Lambert, 1989), research has demonstrated that while students initially do slightly better on achievement tests after instruction with this model, they do slightly worse on tests of problem solving, creativity, and abstract thinking. Wright and DeCetter (in Lambert, 1989) found that students who take responsibility for their own learning and have an internal locus of control do worse with direct instruction while students with an external locus of control do better. A task oriented and high achieving student does worse with direct instruction than with less direct approaches (Ebmeier and Good, in Lambert, 1989). Robbins and Wolfe (in Lambert, 1989) state that achievement scores plateau and then decline after three years with direct instruction as the predominant teaching strategy. Lambert (1989) says that similar findings have been found around the country which raises doubts about using direct instruction as the predominant teaching strategy. They further assert while there is a place for direct instruction, it should not be at the expense of human development. Cuban (1989) says that critics of direct instruction find that there is a small amount of subject matter covered; the work is tedious and routine; there is

too great an emphasis on test scores; it is inappropriate for secondary school subjects; and there is low expectation for teaching reasoning and critical thinking skills at the elementary school level.

Gersten and Carnine (1986) have an answer for some of these concerns. They address the criticism that students who are taught by this step-by-step method will all think exactly the same way. In research about study skills, it was found that students will personalize the strategy taught by omitting and adding steps when they are working independently. Students who adapted the steps were still accurate. It is only necessary to strictly follow the model in the early stages of instruction as long as the student's performance remains accurate.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

When looking at the two approaches described in this paper, it is necessary to look at the circumstances of the teaching situation, the role of the teacher, and the expected role of the students. A useful model is based upon the Situational Leadership Model commonly used in public policy decisions. There is no "one best way" to influence others, but the teacher will be more or less effective depending on the readiness or maturity of the students. This model can be used as a reference to choose an instructional model appropriate to the readiness of a teacher and students to use the strategy, to choose the approach most useful for the teacher's style and learning environment of the classroom, and to communicate effective ways to influence behavior (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).



Student Readiness

	HIGH	MODERATE		LOW
ABILITY	R4	R3	R2	R1
WILLINGNESS	Capable Motivated Socially adept	Mixed ability Insecure Need social skills	Mixed ability Extrinsic motives Need direction	Deficit skills Unwilling Unmotivated

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1 TELLING

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Teacher characteristics

The teacher prefers a teacher-directed structured environment. This may be because the teacher is established and is resistant to modifying the strategies that have been successful for them over the years. The teacher may lack knowledge, experience, training, or skills necessary to implement cooperative learning. The teacher may feel uncomfortable using small groups because of the noise level of the groups, the unexpected incidents that occur in group work, or the inability or unwillingness to teach group social skills. The administration may not encourage group work for some of the same reasons. With the direct instruction model, the teacher makes the classroom decisions, lectures or tells the students what they need to know based upon what skills need to be directly taught, and guides classroom practice. The teacher believes that motivation will come from learning the material directly taught.

Student characteristics

The students who benefit from this model exhibit deficient skills in the subject matter, low motivation to do independent work not supervised by a teacher or aide, and need material modeled for them. Students who have not had experience with cooperative learning activities and have been socialized to be competitive or concerned with their own work throughout their school career will also have difficulty with cooperative activities. They look to the teacher to direct their activities and establish goals. This model

seems most useful for students with special needs who must learn strategies
to help them succeed and to help them with their reading problems in order to progress to higher level cognitive tasks.

Classroom characteristics

Direct instruction is used to introduce new material, review deficit skills, give practice to reinforce learning, and give students strategies for academic success. The teacher will be instructing students in small groups or as a whole class with very specific procedures and materials.

2 SELLING

SLAVIN'S STAD COOPERATIVE LEARNING (Slavin,1988)

Teacher characteristics

The teacher likes to use whole class instruction to teach the class new material so the teacher is making decisions about what to teach. The teacher provides opportunities for clarification of the concepts taught to the entire class by using cooperative learning activities in the form of teams who complete worksheets to understand the material and quiz each other about the material. The teacher likes quiet businesslike groups so the groups deal with worksheets that the teacher supplies. The teacher wants to see what each individual has learned so individual quizzes follow the team work. The teacher believes in extrinsic rewards for motivation so a weekly newspaper shows improvement scores, perfect scores, and team standings.

Student characteristics

The students are heterogeneously grouped according to ability, ethnicity, race, and sex. Many may be mainstreamed special education students or considered at-risk because of behavior problems, learning difficulties, or motivational problems. They need direct instruction and supervised group work in order to learn effectively. They also benefit from the sports analogy built into this activity by the use of teams and team scores which are reported in the weekly newsletter. The use of improvement scores challenges students to do better than before in order to benefit the team.

Classroom characteristics

Whole class instruction where the teacher lectures, leads discussions, and provides audio-visual material is followed by team work. The teaching material for the team work must provide for one correct answer so the teams focus on factual concrete knowledge rather than higher level critical thinking, evaluative or inferential skills. Some days would be spent in whole class instruction while others would be spent doing team work.

3 PARTICIPATING

JOHNSON'S COOPERATIVE MODEL (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1984)

Teacher characteristics

The teacher shares ideas before group work by capitalizing on the student's prior knowledge, defining relevant concepts, explaining procedures to be used, and asking questions about the how well the class understands the assignment. The teacher is willing and able to teach social skills such as leadership, trust-building, conflict

management, and communication skills. The teacher decides upon group composition and roles that group members perform to allow for an optimal combination of student abilities. The teacher feels comfortable allowing the groups to function with a minimum of teacher direction and intervenes only when necessary for task assistance. The role of the teacher is to observe to see how well the groups functioned and to participate when applicable.

Student characteristics

Students are grouped heterogeneously and may be insecure about group work if they are unskilled in collaboration. Small group size may be appropriate for students new to cooperative groups. Students must be willing to share knowledge in order to come up with a group product. Since they may each have different resources or jobs in the group, they must be able to complete the task assigned or willing to help group members understand the task. Group rewards provide the motivation for the group to work toward an end product.

Classroom characteristics

Since the teacher builds on prior learning of students and allows the groups a great deal of freedom in fitting their individual task to the task of the entire group, the verbal interchange between students allows for the exploration of higher level conceptual material rather than just factual material. The teacher provides a sense of closure for the class by telling the students what the groups did well and what they still needed to improve upon. The psychological aspects of cooperation are stressed because the student is taught how to function in a group setting.

4 DELEGATING

SHARAN'S GROUP INVESTIGATION MODEL (Sharan &Sharan,1989)

Teacher characteristics

The teacher introduces broad topics to the entire class in the form of questions from the curriculum or student interests followed by time to explore a variety of sources about the general topic. Teachers must be able to see how topics can be expanded to capitalize on student's interests. Students decide on subtopics by working together. The subtopics are placed into categories in order that students can join the group that is working on the subtopic he or she is interested in. The teacher must be willing to turn over responsibilities for learning over to the students and allow them to implement the cooperative activity. The teacher monitors activities and plans time for the final presentations.

Student characteristics

Students must be able to work independently because they choose what topics they will explore and which group they will join. They must have maturity because they have an active part in planning the entire project and staying on task. They must have social skills because they need to divide the work and maintain motivation to finish the task. Since they will critique each other's work during the investigation as well as during the final presentation, they must have the ability to evaluate and criticize without being offensive.

Classroom characteristics

A classroom using this model will have a variety of activities going on at any one time. Some people may be consulting resource material while others are actively participating in group discussion about various phases of the investigation. The students will be motivated by the material that interests them while reading, writing, and discussing what they are learning according to their various abilities, knowledge, and skills. Higher level thinking skills will be utilized as they students confront new material and synthesize the material with their prior knowledge.

DISCUSSION

The teacher can use the above Situational Leadership Model to assess the teacher's own characteristics, the student's characteristics, and the type of classroom characteristics that are most useful for their own teaching situation. The learning model must fit the situation. As with any teaching method, no one should be used exclusively because the students will tire of the activity and it will become less useful. Students do need to know how to work independently in order to know how to complete a task.

Some variables in an educational setting are beyond the teacher's control. In a middle school reading classroom, there are many variables to consider. The students may be tracked into homogeneous ability groups or may be heterogeneously mixed. The students not only exhibit a wide range of reading abilities, but also a diversity of learning styles. Some students like to work directly with the teacher while others benefit from computer use and audio visual aids. Some students are avid readers while others require a great

deal of motivation. The teacher must pay attention to student needs in order to utilize the best learning activities.

The learning models must fit the situation. The teacher will need to decide how much modification will be necessary to alter the instructional setting and to adapt materials. A key consideration is teacher preparation time. Learning to structure the learning environment will initially take a great deal of the teacher's time. The teacher will need to decide what subject matter or skills are necessary for the task. The teacher will need to decide how to foster the group interdependence. The grouping could be for skill reinforcement, initial learning activities, practice activities, or for enrichment. The teacher will need to think about financial support if extrinsic rewards are to be given. Since it is unlikely that the teacher will be able to forget about grades, the teacher will need to determine how grades will be determined.

Also, cooperative learning can not just be mandated by the administration. Teachers will need in-service training, support groups to solve problems and brainstorm about new ideas, and possibly new materials. Schools of the future must provide for the diversity of student needs, yet must give each student the opportunity to learn to read and understand important and meaningful material which will challenge the student to do the best that he or she can do.

REFERENCES

Aronson, E., Blaney, N., Stephan, C., Sikes, J., & Snapp, M. (1978) *The jigsaw classroom.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Biklen, D. (1989) Making Difference Ordinary in Stainback, S., Stainback, W., & Forest, M. (eds.) *Educating all students in the mainstream of regular education.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Crowell, S. (1989). A new way of thinking: The challenge of the future. *Educational leadership 47* (1): 60-63.

Cuban, L. (1989). At risk students: What teachers and students can do. *Educational leadership 45* (5): 29-33.

Feldman, R. S. (ed.) (1986). *The social psychology of education; Current research and theory.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Gersten, R. & Carnine, D. (1986). Direct instruction in reading comprehension. *Educational leadership 43:* 70-78.

Hersey, P. & Blanchard K. (1982). *Management of organizational behavior.* Prentice Hall, Inc.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R., Holubec, E.J. and Roy, P.,(1984). *Circles of learnings: Cooperation in the classroom.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R. & Holubec, E.J., (1986). *Revised Circles of Learning.* Edina, MN. : Interaction Book Co.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1987). Mainstreaming and cooperative learning strategies. *Exceptional children 52* (6): 553-561.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1989). Toward a cooperative effort: A response to Slavin. *Educational leadership 46* (7) : 80-81.

Koerner, T. (1989). Reform plans, implications for principals discussed by chairman of task force on education of middle school students. *NASSP bulletin 73* (5): 64-75.

Lambert, L. (1989). The end of an era of staff development. *Educationall leadership 47* (1): 78-81.

Lewis, R. (1983). Learning disabilities and reading: Instructional recommendations from current research. *Exceptional children 50* (3): 230-233.

Mercer, C. (1987). *Students with learning disabilities.* Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Nelson, R. (1989). Of robin's eggs, teachers, and educational reforms. *Phi delta kappan April* : 632-638.

Reith, H., Polsgrove, L., & Semmel, M. (1981). Instructional variables that make a difference: Attention to task and beyond. *Exceptional children quarterly 2* 61-69.

Rosenshine, B. (1978). The third cycle of research on teaching effects: Content covered, academic engaged time, and quality of instruction in *78th yearbook of the national society for the study of education.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sharan, Y. & Sharan, S. (1989-1990). Group investigation expands cooperative learning. *Educational leadership 47* (4): 17-21.

Sharan, Y. & Sharan, S. (1987). Training teachers for cooperative learning. *Educational leadership 45* (3): 20-25.

Slavin, R., (1987). Cooperative learning and the cooperative school. *Educational leadership 45* (3): 7-13.

Slavin, R. (1988). Cooperative learning and student achievement. *Educational leadership 46* (2): 31-32.

Slavin, R. & Madden, N. (1989) What works for the students at risk: A research synthesis. *Educational leadership 46* (5): 4-13.

Slavin, R. (1988). *Student team Learning: An overview and Practical Guide Second Edition.* Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.

Tarver, S. (1986). Cognitive behavior modification, direct instruction, and holistic approaches to the education of students with

learning disabilities. *Journal of learning disabilities 19* : 368-375.

Ysseldyke, J. & Algozzine, B. (1982). *Critical issues in special and remedial education.* Dallas, TX: Houghton Mifflen.